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FROM: ATHENS

TO: Secretary of State

NO: 396, SEPTEMBER 6, 11 PM

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR
REVIEWED BY [signature] DATE 6 MAY 1982

ACTION DEPARTMENT 396, INFORMATION THESSALONIKI UNNUMBERED

EMBTEL 373

IN MASS RALLY AT ATHENS SEPT 5, CENTER UNION LEADER GEORGE PAPANDREOU TOLD CROWD CU WOULD NOT PARTICIPATE IN NOV 3 ELECTIONS UNLESS PIPINELIS GOVT RESIGNS. CLAIMING THAT "PEOPLE HAVE NOW SPOKEN," PAPANDREOU ASSERTED NOW TIME FOR "KING TO SPEAK" BY ASKING FOR PIPINELIS RESIGNATION.

ALTHOUGH CROWD WAS LARGE--BEST ESTIMATES PLACE IT AROUND 125,ØØØ--IT WAS NOT STRIKINGLY ENTHUSIASTIC. (PAPANDREOU'S SON TOLD EMBASSY OFFICER DAY BEFORE RALLY THEY HOPED FOR ATTENDANCE 3ØØ TO 4ØØ,ØØØ). LARGE NUMBER OF EDA FOLLOWERS INCLUDING LEADERS PASSALIDIS AND ILIOU TOOK PART, PROBABLY MAKING UP ONE FOURTH TO ONE THIRD OF CROWD, AND CHANTED THEIR SLOGANS TOGETHER WITH THOSE OF CU. DEMONSTRATION WAS ORDERLY, WITH ONLY ONE INCIDENT (INVOLVING POLICE AND CU YOUTH LEADER), AND THIS AFTER RALLY OVER.

COMMENT: PAPANDREOU SAID LITTLE NEW IN SPEECH, AND SPEECH WAS BASICALLY REITERATION EARLIER DECLARATIONS. PERHAPS MOST SIGNIFICANT WAS UNEQUIVOCAL STATEMENT THAT CU WOULD NOT PARTICIPATE IN ELECTION IF PIPINELIS GOVT DOES NOT RESIGN. THROUGHOUT SPEECH HE CONCENTRATED FIRE ON PIPINELIS. (ALTHOUGH HE ALSO ATTACKED NEW ELECTORAL LAW AND VOTE OF ARMY, HE DID NOT IMPLY HE WOULD ABSTAIN IF LAW NOT AMENDED.) ADDITIONALLY, PAPANDREOU APPEARED ISSUE WARNING TO KING WHEN HE SAID THAT, UNLESS PIPINELIS RESIGNS, CU WILL WAGE "INEXORABLE STRUGGLE, USING ALL MEANS AND, IF NECESSARY, ALL SACRIFICES."

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IN DEMANDING PIPINELIS RESIGNATION AS PRICE ELECTORAL PARTICIPATION, PAPANDREOU PLACED HIMSELF IN POSITION FROM WHICH IT WILL BE HARD RETREAT SHOULD KING STAND FIRM WITH PIPINELIS. IN ADDITION, CU ABSTENTION WITH POSSIBLE EDA PARTICIPATION IN ELECTIONS COULD BE POLITICAL SUICIDE FOR PAPANDREOU. THEREFORE, PAPANDREOU PROBABLY HOPING THAT IF KING DOES NOT ACCEDE TO DEMAND, ABSTENTION THREAT AT LEAST WILL RESULT IN POSTPONEMENT ELECTIONS. THIS CONNECTION, SOURCE CLOSE TO PAPANDREOU TELLS US PAPANDREOU INCREAS'NGLY RELUCTANT FACE ELECTORATE NOW.

GP-4.

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